



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

Several AOT staff members were on hand last Tuesday as Dr. Buzz Aldrin took the historic first walk on the Grand Canyon Skywalk. The Hualapai Tribe unveiled their new attraction at Grand Canyon West to the hundreds of international media in attendance, giving the world a glimpse into Arizona's Grand Canyon. Dr. Aldrin's first walk was the highlight of the day's festivities, but the Hualapai Tribe planned an entire day full of memorable experiences for this landmark celebration. Members of the tribe entertained the crowd with traditional dances and John Bennett Harrington, the first Native American in space, joined Dr. Aldrin in being one of the first to experience the Grand Canyon Skywalk. Congratulations to the Hualapai Tribe and everyone at Grand Canyon West for a magnificent launch event and best of luck on March 28 when the Grand Canyon Skywalk opens to the general public.

Have a great week.

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Arizona Tourism University Presents Geotourism Workshop Series

Please mark your calendars for AOT's newest workshop series featuring "Geotourism." The workshops will focus on Geotourism and how Arizona and its new Arizona Origins initiative will apply and market these important principals. Learn how Arizona and its southern neighbor Sonora are bringing increased attention to the state's unique Geotourism assets through the new Arizona Sonora Desert Geotourism MapGuide which is a cooperative effort with National Geographic. The workshops will focus on how you can use these concepts and principles and integrate them into your marketing and product development programs. To register for a workshop please contact Sarah Martins at smartins@azot.gov or by phone at 602-364-3687.

March 28, 2007

9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Pueblo Grande Museum

4619 East Washington Street

Phoenix, AZ 85034

April 3, 2007

9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Tohono Chul Park

7366 North Paseo Del Norte

Tucson, AZ 85704

April 4, 2007

9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Bisbee Convention Center

#2 Copper Queen Plaza

Bisbee, AZ 85603

AOT to Offer Marketing Round Table Meeting Series

As part of the Arizona Office of Tourism's mission to expand travel activities through tourism promotion and development, AOT is pleased to present the Marketing Roundtable, a new series of meetings focused on marketing and advertising efforts of cities and communities throughout Arizona. The Marketing Roundtable has been designed to communicate AOT's current marketing efforts, expand upon AOT's brand strategy and discuss community marketing efforts all while encouraging an open discussion among attendees. AOT will be offering Marketing Roundtables quarterly in various communities throughout the state, with the first meeting tentatively scheduled for Friday, May 4th in Phoenix. (An agenda for the meeting, along with the meeting location will be sent at a later date.) To RSVP for the Marketing Roundtable on May 4th or if you have agenda recommendations for the Marketing Roundtable, please contact Troy Thompson via email at tthompson@azot.gov.

Trippin' with AOT

Arizona's Rails & Trails Press Trip

AOT's Media Relations division is hosting a group press trip this week with journalists from all over the world. Five journalists (one each from the UK, Germany, Canada, Mexico and the U.S.)

will experience "Arizona's Rails & Trails" this week by visiting Sedona, Williams, Grand Canyon, Flagstaff, Clarkdale and Scottsdale. The tour focuses on Arizona's fun rail rides, railroad history, hiking and Jeep tours. Many thanks to our partners from around the state who helped create an exciting itinerary. For more information on this tour, please contact Heather Koncilja at hkoncilja@azot.gov.

Industry News

Hotel Check-In

PricewaterhouseCoopers reports there were a total of 24 new hotel brand launches in the U.S. in 2005 and 2006, which is the largest number of brand introductions in a two-year period since 1989. The new brand launches represented non-U.S. brands affiliating with hotels in the U.S., new concepts targeted at Gen-Xers and Millennials, independent brands, brands affiliated with established lodging companies and brands at many price levels. Among the brands introduced were Waldorf-Astoria Collection, Le Crillion, Blue, aloft, NYLO, Cambria Suites and Hyatt Place. (*Modern Agent.com*, 3/19)

EU Governments Approve "Open-Skies" Accord

European Union governments on Thursday morning agreed to deregulate the \$18 billion trans-Atlantic airline market, endorsing a treaty with the U.S. that will spur competition, encourage mergers and end decades of national protection for carriers including British Airways. Tourism ministers approved an "open-skies" accord allowing EU airlines to make U.S. flights from any of the bloc's nations instead of just from their home country. The deal will also scrap rules letting only British Airways, Virgin Atlantic Airways, American Airlines and United Airlines fly between the U.S. and London's Heathrow airport. The accord will lower airline fares and increase annual EU-U.S. traffic by 26 million passengers to about 73 million over five years. (*Bloomberg.com*)

Trade Groups to Congress: Travel is an Opportunity, Not a Risk

Leaders from the travel industry testified last Tuesday before a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee that travel and tourism is America's greatest tool for combating its increasingly negative image around the world. Charles L. Merin, president of the Travel Business Roundtable, and Geoff Freeman, executive director of the Discover America Partnership, asserted the need to embrace security at our borders while enacting policies to make the U.S. more welcoming to legitimate international travelers. "We are in the midst of a complex travel crisis that is having an enormous impact on our country's economy and public diplomacy efforts," said Freeman. "As a country, we are missing a huge opportunity to reach the 'hearts and minds' of our international visitors," he said. Tuesday's hearing was one in a series called by subcommittee chairman William Delahunt, D-Mass., focusing on public diplomacy challenges the U.S. faces around the world. (*Special to Travel Advance*)

Tourism Pumps More into U.S. Economy

U.S. tourists have been shopping less but paying more for their hotel rooms, and the result, in recent months, has been 8 percent more economic oomph from tourism than at the same time last year, according to a report released this week by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. On the heels of a decline in economic output in the previous quarter, it shows a welcome rebound. The tourism industry across America grew more than three times faster than the economy as a whole did. For full year 2006, the tourism economy grew by a more modest 3 percent, the fifth year of

growth, though it was slightly less than the growth rate for the economy as a whole. Among the national trends: Accommodations were up 3.6 percent, less than in 2005 but more than any of the four years before that. Passenger air transportation was up 1.7 percent, less than half of the increase in 2005, which in turn was less than half of the increase in 2006. Car rentals were up 2.1 percent, also less than half of the increase in 2005, but in line with the year before that. Shopping was up 4.1 percent, while recreation and entertainment was up 2.2 percent. (*Pacific Business News.com*)

Fast-growing Adventure Travelers Likely to be Women

If you're wondering whose doing the most adventure travel these days, the answer may surprise you: women, and not the hairy-chested image of the macho man often associated with this fast-growing segment of the travel market. Women make up the majority of adventure travelers worldwide, according to the first annual 2006 Adventure Travel Industry Survey, Practices and Trends, released by the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA). Another trend in the report: about half of tour operators who are not currently using travel agents to sell their products plan to do it in the future. Gender, travelers' destination preferences, and sales channel data represent just some of the data in the 50+ page, first-of-its-kind survey, according to ATTA.

Some highlights from interviews with travelers representing 35 countries:

- Women comprise 52% of adventure travelers.
- 41-60 year olds comprise the highest participating age group.
- 46% of all companies offer sustainability program/s for customers.
- The average land cost for an adventure travel trip: \$2,122.
- 83% of survey respondents realized revenue increases between 2004 and 2005.

New Data Show Continued Decline in Overseas Travel to U.S.

Figures just released from the Department of Commerce show that far from enjoying a "full recovery," America's travel economy continues to lose millions of overseas visitors, costing America billions in revenue, according to the Discover America Partnership. "We have lost nearly 60 million international travelers since 9/11 and the problem is only getting worse," said Geoff Freeman, executive director of the partnership, a coalition of American business leaders. "As travel around the world skyrockets, the U.S. is mired in a slump," he said. While the overall number of international visitors to the U.S. finally returned to pre-9/11 levels in 2006, travelers from Canada and Mexico account for the increase. Overseas travel has declined 17% since 2001. "It's time for Congress to address this growing problem in a way that both strengthens our security and improves the efficiency of the travel process," Freeman said. Details at 202-408-2172. (*Special to Travel Advance*)